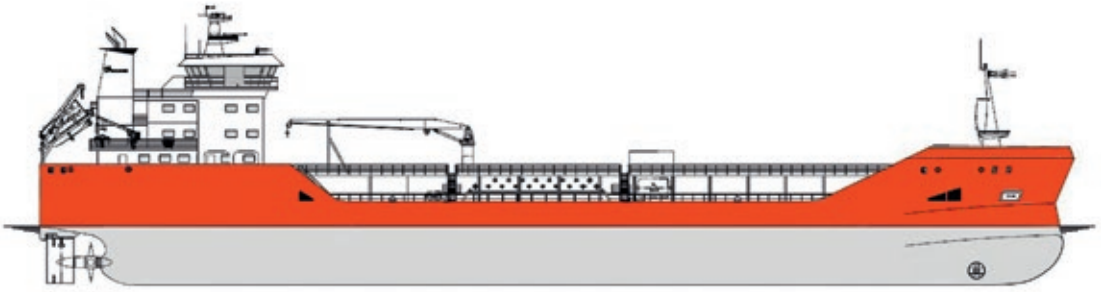
DEUTSCHE AFRIKA-LINIEN
JOHN T. ESSBERGER

news

December/2019 The Group's In-House Magazine www.rantzau.de

Essberger Tankers are planning an extensive newbuilding programme

Up to eight 6,600 dwt vessels/Ice class, stainless steel tanks and LNG plants



Preliminary drawing of the planned advanced chemical parcel tanker class, LNG tanks on deck will be added

Essberger Tankers are planning a major investment in up to eight new vessels. After a major refit programme of 14 tankers, successfully completed within schedule in 2019, Essberger Tankers and Essberger Shipmanagement are currently completing the specifications for an advanced type of chemical parcel tanker of 6,600 dwt with stainless steel tanks and 1A ice class.

The contracts should be signed in the second quarter of 2020. Says Heinrich von Rantzau: "We are paying particular attention to environmentally friendly propulsion concepts and relevant alternatives, for example fuels such as LNG. The clock is ticking. In 2026, 14 ships of the current fleet will have reached the age limit of 25 years." The new type of vessel, as we see it at this state of planning, is a highly efficient single-screw medium-speed dual-fuel engine-driven Chemical IMO Class II/III Including Oil Products parcel tanker with machinery and accommodation located aft. Eight pairs of cargo tanks with double skin are arranged, all with duplex stainless steel and cargo piping. Sixteen cargo segregations are arranged. Design maximum discharge rate is 6 x 200 m^3, cargoes include HMD, phenol, TDI and PO. The principal dimensions are LOA 115 m, beam 18 m, draught 6.5 m, air draft max 34 m. The type of main engine has not been decided yet, but it will have appr. 3,000 kW for a service speed of 12.5 kn and an expected cruising range of 4,000 nautical miles. The vessel will be designed with a high focus on sustainability in terms of optimised fuel consumption, ready for shore power and LNG. The vessel design and layout will be optimised for our specialised trade, including efficient tank cleaning and port operations, since we spend 60% of the time in port.

Ken Bloch Sørensen joins DAL/JTE board

Head of Liner Services brings with him vast experience in the shipping industry

Ken Bloch Sørensen (60) is Danish by birth but he knows Hamburg very well

The following official announcement was published by the DAL/JTE Managing Owners Dr Eberhart and Mr Heinrich von Rantzau: "Mr Hartmut Lühr, MD of Deutsche Afrika-Linien, will retire in the middle of 2020. We would like to thank Mr Lühr for his outstanding service during the last more than ten years. We are pleased to announce that Mr Ken Bloch Sørensen (60) will join the management board of our Group of Companies on 2 December 2019 and will take over as Head of Liner Services as of 1 January 2020. For a transitional period Mr Luehr will support Mr Sørensen." *(continued on page 2)*

Economically and politically we are currently in a time of transition, and our company is likewise affected. It shows our strengths but also where we need to improve. The figures are clear: we need to act! And that is what we are doing. The Essberger Tankers fleet has undergone the biggest refit programme in the company's history. Our Shipmanagement is working on a newbuilding programme for chemical tankers to replace older tonnage. Major effort is required to convince our customers that quality comes at a price. Long-term contracts bring planning security for both parties involved.

Vast challenges need to be tackled by our liner trade, too. Higher charter rates, rising prices for low-sulphur fuel, additional costs due to bad performance in the ports of South Africa and insufficient freight rates are weighing down on our result. We know that DAL have an excellent reputation, but this added value is becoming increasingly more difficult to translate into sustainable freight rates. Our expectations in UAFL have not yet been met but we are making up leeway. Dry Cargo is still struggling as a result of bad charter rates, especially on the bulk carrier market. We have therefore decided to transfer the commercial management of these ships into a pool, which is able to work far more effectively with a larger fleet. Dr Michael Triskatis and Ken Bloch Sørensen joining our company has brought about changes in our management board. They both have great expertise in the shipping industry as well as fresh ideas and suggestions.

I thank all our staff for their dedication and I wish you a happy Christmas and a successful new year.

Yours Eberhart von Rantzau

“Availability of new bunker is still a problem”

Ralf Stüwe about the technical aspects to comply with reduced sulphur emissions required by law as of January 2020

Ralf Stüwe, Head of DAL Operations

A topic the general public is hardly aware of has been looming over the shipping industry for years: the requirement to run ship engines on low-sulphur, i.e. environmentally friendly fuel, as of 2020. This involves huge organisational and technical changes. In this interview, Ralf Stüwe reiterates the most important aspects.

DAL/JTE NEWS: 1 January 2020 is an important date for shipping.

STÜWE: As of next year, the sulphur content in the emission of engines must not exceed 0.5%. Up to now the limit was 3.5%.

DAL/NEWS: How can that technically be done?

STÜWE: There are two options. First, the commonly used and comparatively cheaper high-sulphur heavy fuel oil with a sulphur content of 3.5% may then only be used if the ship is fitted with filter systems. Retrofitting these so-called scrubbers is difficult and therefore expensive, and they take up a lot of space on board. That is why this option is better suited to very large vessels. The second option is: as of 1 January 2020, the ships use only low-sulphur fuel with a sulphur content of just 0.5%, a fuel which is significantly more expensive. Alternatively, the ships can also use marine gas oil (MGO), which is very light and similar to diesel, with a sulphur content of just 0.1%, but it is even more expensive.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Which option will the DAL/JTE fleet choose?

STÜWE: Our tankers have been running on MGO for quite some time now. Their main range is the Baltic and North Sea, where the sulphur content requirement has been 0.1% for several years already. As of 2020, our container ships and bulk carriers will run on low-sulphur fuel with a sulphur content of 0.5%. For this, the entire fuel system will have to be changed. There is a precise switchover schedule for each ship. We have been working on this for the last year to ensure the remaining fuel has been used up by the end of 2019 and that the tanks will have been cleaned. The actual switchover will take place during normal operations. Since 1 November 2019, all our ships that cannot call at a bunkering port before year end have been receiving low-sulphur fuel. They will have to switch over to the new fuel during their voyage. For the container ships, we had to set up a contingency plan to ensure a safety buffer of two to three weeks, because due to the long waiting times in the South African ports and in Zanzibar our sailing schedules cannot always be maintained. Another reason why exact timing is so important is that we have to discharge all remaining high-sulphur fuel after 1 January.

DAL/JTE NEWS: What about the availability, if worldwide most of the global fleet has to switch to low-sulphur fuel from one day to the next? And, moreover, what effect will this have on the price?

STÜWE: Availability is already a problem now. In Rotterdam the situation is under control, but in important bunkering ports such as Fujairah there have been bottlenecks in the last few weeks. Of course, the suppliers have been exploiting the situation. Hopefully that will improve soon. In the southern Indian Ocean, low-sulphur fuel is not available at all. Our UAFL feeder vessels will therefore have to run on MGO until it is. What effect the switchover will have on prices in general is not predictable yet. But so far, low-sulphur fuel has been about twice as expensive as high-sulphur fuel.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Please tell us a bit more about the technical problems the switchover will entail.

STÜWE: As far as the technical aspects are concerned, there is no problem. However, a few points should be observed. The lower lubricating effect of low-sulphur fuel can be compensated by adding lub oil. The tanks and pipes have to be cleaned and sluiced. For this we use chemical additives and MGO. For the separate day tanks, on the other hand, this is very labour-intensive, as it can only be done by hand. We will have to see whether and to what extent low-sulphur fuel from different suppliers can be mixed. For the “DAL Kalahari”, we have signed a special agreement with a supplier to be on the safe side during the transition period.

Ken Bloch Sørensen: Profile of a professional

(continued from page 1)

Ken Bloch Sørensen is an internationally successful manager and entrepreneur with experience as head of large shipping and logistics companies as well as in private equity and consulting. He has a special affinity to Hamburg. He and his wife have three grown-up sons.

Mr Sørensen was born in Copenhagen and attended school there until he completed his university entrance examinations. Without really knowing what kind of career to pursue he enrolled at the Copenhagen Business School (CBS), which is renowned as one of the leading business schools not only in Europe but worldwide.

Many CBS graduates eventually join Denmark’s biggest company, A.P. Moller-Maersk, as did Ken Sørensen, who started his professional career in 1980 as a trainee at Maersk. After his training period, he stayed at Maersk, and remained there for the next 18 years. During this time, he worked for them in senior positions in Indonesia, Poland and Taiwan, and from 1997 to 1998 as Managing Director of Maersk Deutschland in Hamburg.

“I learnt German at school,” he says, “and I could speak it well. Yet whenever people from the port phoned me with their strong Hamburg accent and peculiar expressions, I found it hard to understand them. But after two months, I had learnt their language. In any case my memories of Hamburg are all good. We felt at home here.”

In 1999, the family moved to Berne/Switzerland, where Mr Sørensen joined the Swiss Federal Railway (SBB). As CEO of SBB Cargo, he restructured the company with its staff of 4,000 into an independent, stand-alone division of SBB.

In land-locked Switzerland he started to miss the sea air of international shipping, so in 1999, he switched to the management board of the NOL/APL shipping group in London, and took over as Head of Region Asia for two years in 2002, which is headquartered in Singapore. From 2003 to 2005, Ken Sørensen was Executive Director of the European Liner Affairs Association (ELAA) based in Brussels, a central political association representing the interests of the container shipping industry (Box Club). As CEO of United Arab Shipping Co (U.A.S.C.) located in Dubai he managed to expand this company, turning it into a global player within just a few years and thus doubling its turnover.

In the following years, Ken Sørensen worked as a self-employed consultant and asset manager, before becoming President and CEO of Algoma Central Corporation in Toronto in 2015, a shipowning company that specialises in operating dry cargo carriers, tankers, cement tankers and bulk carriers on the North American lakes. By the time he left in 2019, the Algoma fleet had more than doubled in size from 37 to 80 ships. Ken Sørensen sees himself as a man whose strengths lie in promptly identifying a company’s weak spots, restructuring it and restoring it. His amazing career proves this ability. That applies not only to large corporations but also owner-operated and family-run shipowning companies. And why Hamburg again of all places? “I have lived in many cities all over the world,” he says. “My wife and I feel at home in the north, so we were drawn back here. Copenhagen is not far, and last but not least we have very fond memories of Hamburg. For us, this is where it all turns full circle. The Deutsche Afrika-Linien/John T. Essberger Group is a family-run company rich in tradition, and my job there is a challenge I very much look forward to.”

Essberger Night: Here we go!

Let’s have fun, let’s talk, let’s get to know each other even better: The Essberger Tanker crew welcomes more than 200 guests

Essberger welcoming committee: Dr Michael Triskatis, Heinrich von Rantzau and Jan Eghøj with Jens Scharner, Rostock port

Johannes Törnqvist (Kemira) with Per-Christian Dettwiler

Maren Buchhorn (Clarksons) with Hans-Christian Olsen (Euro Shipping)

Sandra Löwe with Dr Ricardo Alvarez (Deutsche Afrika-Linien/John T. Essberger Group)

Erik Hartzell (Monteriva), Anders Lindberg (Preem) and Frederik Backman (Preem)

Tim van Bergen Bravenboer (Lyondell Basell), Malte Willer (Essberger Tankers), Aleksandra Maksimovic (Lyondell Basell), Suzanne Roodenberg (Shell Chemicals), Maurits van der Ven (Shell Chemicals)

Corrado Savi (Nova Chartering), Vanessa Garcia (Vanguard Shipping), Frank Breuer (Essberger Tankers), Juliana González Piedrahita (Lalemant)

Pietro Panzeri (Genoa Energy) with Svenja Behnke (Essberger Tankers)

Abel Nieto Barreiro (Odin Marine), Montsé Mallofré (BRS), Jordi Marti (Iberica Maritima) and Jorge Parada (Odin Marine)

Michael Moore (Monteriva), Danny Payne (Graypen), Daniel Karstens (Essberger Tankers) and Scott Kelly (Graypen)

Anna Eidenschink, Merle May, Tim Southall (Clarksons) and Bob Waddell (Sea Point Marine)

Caren Braemer (Helm AG)

Photos: Gerdlight

Sudermühlen: Where professionals meet

John T. Essberger's captains and officers dressed up for the official dinner image with Heinrich & Annette von Rantzau

C/O Ruslanas Karpovas, C/E Olegs Cerepanovs, C/E Ronald de Bruin, 3/O Robin Groenhuijzen, 2/E Ruslans Sokolovs, C/E Willem Vijverberg, Cpt Orjan Møller, C/E Jan Sonneveld, Cpt Einer Bjørkavag, Cpt Jeroen de Koster, C/E Tomasz Wolczek, C/E Oleg Byts, 2/E Remigijus Juska, 2/E Koen Schenk, Mr Heinrich von Rantzau, 2/E Branko Stanojevic, 2/O Vladyslav Glukhov, C/E Timo Lajunen, 2/O Andrejs Krutikovs, 2/O Radoslaw Ewertowski, 2/O Bogdan Beshliu, 2/O Radoslaw Ewertowski, 2/O Bogdan Beshliu, 2/O Aleksejs Glinskis, 2/E Michal Imanski, C/E Zygmund Dobrzyniewski, Mrs Annette von Rantzau, 2/O Maciej Maciejuniec, 3/E Szymon Sipiora, Cpt Lukasz Antczak, C/O Cornelis de Snaijer, C/O Jakub Nadaj, C/O Roman Rybin, C/E Stefan Kluijfhout, C/O Eriks Ciblis, 2/E Martijn van Loon, C/E Geert Sap, Cpt Albert ten Wolde

Tees is more than just an ordinary port

A familiar destination for the Essberger Tankers fleet, and also a place of great British chemical industry heritage

Chemical tanker "Georg Essberger" (5,771 dwt) moored along the Inter Terminals Riverside storage facility in the port of Tees. Essberger tankers call at this berth several times a month to discharge small chemical parcels for various customers. It is quite a tricky place since it is far up the river and subject to tidal restrictions.

The Tees is a 137-kilometre-long river in the north-west of England. Only the lower part is navigable by sea-going vessels. The Billingham Reach Industrial Estate of Middlesbrough was once renowned for its steel industry. In 1926, Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), once the largest manufacturer in Britain, set up a production site here. ICI no longer exists but the chemical industry still dominates this region.

Incidentally, ICI also plays a role in literature. The Brunner Mond Company, which ICI initially originated from, was visited in the early 1920s by writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley (1894-1963). In those days the Brunner Mond site was huge and highly advanced, and it inspired him to write his dystopian fiction novel "Brave New World", which was published in 1932 and became one of the most famous novels of all times.

Not so depressing but more in awe, Henry Thorold, an author of travel guides, wrote this about the industrial landscape in 1980: "This is one of the most extraordinary of experiences, a sight almost unique in England. On either side of the road are the works. Steaming, sizzling – tall steel towers, great cylinders, pipes everywhere… At night the whole industrial world along the banks of the Tees comes to life… brilliant with thousand lights, the great grinders of the Transport Bridge dark in silhouette: a magic city."

(Many thanks to Alastair Smith, Port Mulgrave, for the photo.)

"Georg Essberger" discharging at the Inter Terminals Riverside storage facility on the river Tees

South African ports still raising concerns

Fuel consumption of "DAL Kalahari" up by 25% due to higher speeds to make up for port delays

As a result of numerous ongoing deficiencies in the management of the container terminals in the South African ports, including insufficient and inappropriate investment in infrastructure and equipment, poor maintenance of equipment, unreliable IT systems as well as poor employee relations and incentive schemes, Deutsche Afrika-Linien (and all other carriers serving South Africa) are being negatively affected by the resulting excessive berthing delays and extended port stays due to capacity constraints and reduced operational productivity at the terminals.

Consequently, the maintenance of planned sailing schedules is a constant challenge with the need to increase the vessels' operating speeds to uneconomic and environmentally unfriendly levels, omit scheduled ports of call and change the port call rotations.

The latest fuel consumption figures for our "DAL Kalahari" speak for themselves. On the last two round voyages the fuel consumption was 25% higher than otherwise required when the vessel is operating its regular schedule with normal port stay times in South Africa. Also, this year the vessel has not sailed from Durban once according to schedule or arrived at the first port of call in Europe according to schedule despite all implemented measures to catch up on the time lost in the South African ports.

Together with our partners in the SAECS service we have been forced to make at least one port omission such as the Cape Town southbound call or Algeciras northbound call on nearly every voyage.

We are doing everything possible to minimise the negative effects of the contingency measures on our clients until the situation substantially improves in the South African ports and at the container terminals.

Two nations – But one agency team

SAFE Shipping CZ in Prague is Deutsche Afrika-Linien's agent for landlocked countries the Czech Republic and Slovakia

SAFE Shipping CZ is DAL's agent operating in two important countries of Central Europe: the Czech Republic and Slovakia (10.5 and 5.5 million citizens respectively). It has been almost 27 years since former Czechoslovakia peacefully divorced into these new states, and right from the start both young countries have been cooperating very closely in all political, economic and cultural aspects. Even many families are Czecho-Slovakian. No wonder the agency team covers both nations: Czechs and Slovaks.

The office is located in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. There are four people involved in DAL operations: Mr Adam Burda takes care of all the export operational matters, Ms Jindriska Greplova is responsible for import matters, Mr Svatopluk Cimpa for sales, and Ms Marta Lavickova covers all as the MD. It's an experienced and dynamic team that supports each other in their daily tasks.

SAFE Shipping CZ focuses on providing high-quality service to our clients. From the first sales contact through to offering tailored logistics solutions, to the shipment realisation and invoicing, they work closely with the customers on a daily basis in order to become a caring partner to them.

Most of the shipments booked with the DAL service go to South Africa. On this key DAL service, the cargo mainly includes automotive parts, different kinds of chemicals, water treatment systems, welding material and others. In import it is mostly automotive parts and chrome ores.

Jindriska Greplova, Adam Burda, Marta Lavickova, Svatopluk Cimpa

Since neither the Czech Republic nor Slovakia have a coast, both are landlocked countries, the conditions for containerised ocean cargo are quite specific, i.e. the pre/on-carriages, pick-up and drop-off conditions as well as free times are very important aspects of the business.

As experts on the local market specifics, SAFE Shipping supports DAL by finding the most cost-effective and suitable solutions for inland haulage organised for its own as well as other DAL office bookings from or to the area. This includes special inland-rate negotiations with the local rail subcontractors, empty-container repositioning between the inland depots, direct trucking for urgent shipments, etc.

Readers of this article who have just glanced at map might ask if the river Elbe, which springs in the Czech Republic (1,387 metres above sea level) and reaches the North Sea near the port of Hamburg after 1,094 km through the Czech Republic and northern Germany, allows the use of its current for barge services. The answer basically is no, due to the fact that Central Europe has suffered from relatively dry weather conditions in the recent years due to climate changes, which has caused the water level in the Elbe to be insufficient in its upper parts most of the year. Some necessary infrastructure such as weirs and modern river-ports have also not been built yet in the Czech Republic. Another reason would be significantly longer transit times and insufficient capacity in comparison to the existing intermodal (rail/road) connection to the northern ports, which is a very developed, highly reliable solution.

After four challenging decades of the communist era, finally terminated by the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the Czech Republic and Slovakia restarted their way to democracy and becoming members of the European Union in 2004, which has provided a positive environment for both countries, in all aspects of their development.

Their economies are stable, constantly growing, open and export-driven. Both are connected with the other EU states (mainly with Germany which is the biggest trade partner). Industry with roughly 38% and services with about 60% are the main bases of their economies. The leading position is held by the automotive industry, chemical industry, electronics and machinery.

From the services, tourism is very important. There are many attractive places and a lot of things to do in the two small countries. From the picturesque historical centres of Prague, Cesky Krumlov and Bratislava, and many other cities and towns, hundreds of beautiful old castles and palaces scattered across both countries, the protected beauty of nature in the national parks of Sumava and the Tatra mountains, there is something for every visitor.

Whereabouts

December 2019

Ship's name	Master	First Mate	Chief Engineer
Agnes Essberger	Andrey Grzhibovskiy	Aleksandrs Batovs	Mikhail Borisyuk
Alcedo	Paul Leonard De Ridder	Brian De Sterre Roberts	Albertus Knoop
Amalie Essberger	Adam Incewicz	Daniel Kubacki	Adam Szwajka
Anneliese Essberger	Marco Boshuijzen	Wojciech Nowak	Pieter Pasterkamp
Annette Essberger	Koen Ghysels	Martins Taurins	Volodymyr Yurkevych
Ardea	Alex Buren	Eriks Ciblis	Jelle Spoelstra
Caroline Essberger	Arnoldus Van Groenestijn	André Steenbergen	Teunis Oskam
Christian Essberger	Krzysztof Niedzielski	Deniss Andrejevs	Oleksandr Samusenko
Dutch Aquamarine	Jeroen De Koster	Krzysztof Maniecki	Willem Vijverberg
Dutch Emerald	Louis Kint	Pieter Labee	Geert Sap
Dutch Faith	Sander De Bos	Chris De Boer	Jan Sonneveld
Dutch Spirit	Nicky Nicolaas Petrus Burger	Roger Oenema	Ronald De Bruin
Eduard Essberger	Enrique Lopez	Ruslanas Karpovas	Marcin Prena
Ellen Essberger	Adam Krzyzykowski	Adrian Kuzmicz	Artem Glushko
Elsa Essberger	Stefan Grabowski	Marcin Harasim	Aleksey Plyasukhin
Georg Essberger	Marcin Pawlak	Roman Rybin	Tomasz Kozlowski
Gisela Essberger	Ali Ayara	Maksim Naumcik	Artur Kazimierz Gzella
Helga Essberger	Maciej Randak	Evgeniy Buzyrev	Pavel Semyonov
Johann Essberger	Zarko Boko	Dariusz Podsiadly	Oleg Byts
John Augustus Essberger	Yurii Pietukhov	Quirino II Agot	Valeriy Bashkurov
Liesel Essberger	Jose Teixeira	Marcin Zietek	Stefan Tudorache
Lisa Essberger	Albertus Linthorst	Mark Van Den Heuvel	Arnoldus Eland
Lucy Essberger	Antonius Nagel	Cornelis De Snaijer	Stefan Kluijfhout
Maersk Launceston	Mariusz Pleskacz	Vladimir Lobov	Andrzej Szyca
Patricia Essberger	Grzegorz Kakol	Szczepan Pachula	Grzegorz Topolewski
Philipp Essberger	Mareks Satkovskis	Tomasz Rembisz	Vitor Belo
Theodor Essberger	Boguslaw Gajdowski	Blazej Czapiewski	Ryszard Topolewski
Ubena	Pavlo Klyuyev	Ruslan Blazhyyevsky	Ilarion Sorin Chirtes
Ulanga	Ioan-cristian Cioban	Rafel Nones	Piotr Turski
Ursula Essberger	Auke Bijlstra	Marcus Klein	Roel Tichelaar
Wilhelmine Essberger	Jan Ten Wolde	Albertus Konijn	Niels Zeinstra
Selinda	(under new management)		
Swakop	(under new management)		
Zambesi	(under new management)		

Aus der Reederei-Familie

Jubiläen

25 Jahre

Birgit Thien,
HAMMONIA
01.01.1995

Nico von Binzer,
DAL
01.02.1995

10 Jahre

Rowel Narvas Frias,
PMP
03.12.2009

Ryan Extana Jara,
MTM
05.02.2010

Besondere Geburtstage

80 Jahre

Rolf Schultz, 27.01.1940

75 Jahre

Werner Arendt,
22.02.1945

60 Jahre

Capt. Mariusz Pleskacz,
03.12.1959

Capt. Eugeniusz Naciuk,
08.01.1960

Capt. Boguslaw Olbrys,
13.01.1960

Myo Minn,
Elec., 18.02.1960

50 Jahre

Capt. Konstantin Kveselevich,
07.12.1969

Robinaldo Bangcaya Basadre,
CCK, 20.12.1969

Arthur Retarino Malumay,
CCK, 17.02.1970

Neue Mitarbeiter an Land

Tobias Kleinbeckes,
DSA Stuttgart

Niall Mushet,
Ship Management

Ken Sørensen,
DAL

Henrik Voigt,
DSA Düsseldorf

Fabian Wichartz,
DALSA Hamburg

Sonja Zielke,
Essberger Tankers

In den Ruhestand treten

Janusz Ladkowski,
Crewing, 31.12.2019

Werner Scharnowski,
Dry Cargo, 31.12.2019

Bernd Durin,
Trades, 31.01.2020

Wir gratulieren zur Geburt eines Kindes

Cornelis Dijkstra,
Rosalie am 29. Oktober

Wir gedenken

Herrn Dick Gelijns (82),
September 2019, ehemals DAL

Herrn Kurt Groth (84),
Dezember 2019, ehemals JTE

Essberger Tankers – The next generation

Many new faces at the chartering and commercial desks on the 4th floor: Young and determined

Alexander Barkowski, Marc Jarisch, Ben-Lukas Weber, Lars Klamt, Sonja Zielke, Jacqueline Brandt-Stothfang (left to right)

At the Essberger Night in November our new employees attended for the first time. Noticeable was that many of the new members of staff from the chartering and operations desks are relatively young and highly qualified and yet already quite experienced.

Lars Klamt is one of the trainees whom we have already offered long-term employment although he is still an apprentice. Since April 2019, he has been working in the Operations department and in January 2020 he will have officially completed his apprenticeship. He wants to stay in Operations. He is currently mainly responsible for the chemical tankers "Lisa Essberger", "Nordic Saga", "Nordic Nora" and "Nordic Inge". He stays in close contact with the crews, agents and brokers, as is the job in Operations. "I definitely want to stay in shipping. I like it here," he says. When he is not at his desk, he enjoys playing golf and football.

Alexander Barkowski joined the Operations department in September 2019. He is a qualified shipping merchant, successfully completed his apprenticeship at the United Canal Agency in Kiel, and afterwards his Bachelor degree for Shipping and Chartering in Bremen. He gained first practical experience as an operator at German Tankers Shipping. As he was looking for new experiences and challenges, Essberger Tankers was the address to apply for. During his apprenticeship, Alexander already became familiar with the vessels of the Essberger fleet. He is now in charge of "Georg Essberger", "Dutch Spirit" and "Alcedo". In his free times he enjoys playing handball and travelling.

Mark Jarisch is almost an old hand in the industry. When he was a schoolboy, he did an internship at the shipowning company Ernst Russ, where he later started an apprenticeship after he completed his university entrance exams at school. In 2013, when shipowner Russ was sold, he continued at Ernst Russ Shipbroker, before switching to tanker specialists Albis Shipping & Transport four years later. The experience he gained there serves him well in the Chartering department of Essberger Tankers. At some point he decided it was time for something new, and word spreads quickly in shipping circles. So, he joined Essberger on 1 November 2019. Meanwhile he has not only fixed his first vessels but also made friends, which makes it even easier for him to settle in. In his free time, he is a keen sportsman. In any case the DAL/JTE football team will soon have a new player.

Jacqueline Brandt-Stothfang has been a member of the Operations team of Essberger Tankers since 1 October 2019, but she already knows the office at Palmaille 45 in Hamburg well. From her home town of Brunsbüttel on the Kiel Canal ("Everyone knows everyone here!") she moved to Kiel to do an apprenticeship as a shipping merchant at United Canal Agency (UCA). After that, she joined the VOPAK Agency team on Palmaille. She then worked for a freight forwarder in sales and at the same time completed a college degree in Goods Transport & Logistics at night school. Following that, she decided to spend a year abroad and worked as a surfing instructor in a camp in Portugal. She is very good at surfing, kiting and snowboarding, kickboxing and dancing. "If you spend the whole day at a desk, you need physical exercise to compensate," she says. And her good contacts to VOPAK led to her contact to Essberger Tankers, where she works today. "Lots of young people work here, which doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing," she reports. Looking after "Nordic Sund", "Nordic Nelly", "Anneliese Essberger" and "Christian Essberger" makes up the biggest part of her job.

Sonja Zielke is at the post-fixture desk of Essberger Tankers. The job involves a lot of accounting and administration. She comes from Kiel and did a year of voluntary social service in a kindergarten in Dublin/Ireland. She then started a university degree course in economics but left in favour of an apprenticeship to become a shipping merchant at the South Africa-Europe service MACS. Having finished her apprenticeship, she worked in the Sales/Marketing department of MACS, where she stayed for 18 months. After that, she completed her bachelor degree in Maritime Economics and Port Management at the Jade University of Applied Sciences. Following a short period as a purchaser for the laboratory industry, she applied at Essberger Tankers when she saw their job advertisement: "Essberger, I knew them. A good company." And now she is here.

Ben-Lukas Weber joined Essberger Tankers as a trainee. His apprenticeship will end in summer 2020. But he is already working at the Operations desk and has been offered permanent employment for the time after that. Ben-Lukas was born in Hamburg and after finishing school he began his studies in Kiel to become a teacher for English, economics and politics. But after an internship with a dry cargo shipbroker in Hamburg he decided: that's my future! He sent applications to various shipping companies – and John T. Essberger was the first company to offer him an apprenticeship. His abilities and his dedication to the new job soon convinced Essberger Tankers that he should be part of the team. "When I am not in the office, you can find me playing handball," he says.

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"We are focused on small niche ports"

MD Dr Dag-Sven Dieckmann on UAFL's goals

Dr Dag-Sven Dieckmann

United Africa Feeder Line (UAFL) is DAL's subsidiary in the Indian Ocean, offering container services, port operations (ASC) and commodity trading through its trading house EMT. Managing Director Dr Dag-Sven Dieckmann gives a summary of UAFL's current position and a market outlook.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Since UAFL was taken over by DAL in 2011, the company has been faced with many challenges. What is the situation now?

DIECKMANN: Given the challenging circumstances of the shipping industry, we made very good progress in 2019, with substantial growth rates for the shipping activities, as well as the trading house. The market is still dominated by strong competition and overcapacities in the Indian Ocean. But our strategy to focus on the small niche ports in the Indian Ocean has proven to be the right one. To many destinations, we offer the best and most competitive services today. Many customers certainly prefer to ship with us, since we are seen as experts for the Indian Ocean and know how to solve problems in this relatively challenging environment. For example, restarting calls into Mombasa and Zanzibar with our Middle East Express was a success and much appreciated by our customers, since this is the only direct service to Zanzibar. It even attracts the competition to again cooperate with UAFL.

Our fleet is comprised of six vessels and we cover a wide range of ports in Kenya, Tanzania, the Seychelles, the Comoros, Madagascar und Mozambique. In addition, together with our cooperation partners we call at Somalia, Somaliland and South Africa.

DAL/JTE NEWS: What about the economic development in this region?

DIECKMANN: I am quite optimistic. We continue to operate in a growth region. Most African economies have a solid growth rate of 5-6%, which offers lots of opportunities. We have hugely expanded our product range with our trading house Eastbourne Maritime in the last few years. Besides the main commodities cement and rice, we supply the construction industry with steel, sheet metal products and timber. We also offer a range of food products. In the Comoros we successfully operate our own port in Mutsamudu on the island of Anjouan. The port has meanwhile reached a productivity level that makes it one of the best in the region. Unfortunately, there was a technical incident in October, when a reach stacker fell into the harbour basin. Luckily, port operations could continue without any problems, and the stacker was soon salvaged to clear the basin. Accidents like this must not happen and, thank God, nobody was injured. The ASC team reacted quickly and extremely professionally and is doing an excellent job. Running a port like a Swiss clockwork in the Comoros is a great achievement.

DAL/JTE NEWS: The UAFL headquarters are located in Mapou/Mauritius?

DIECKMANN: Correct. And the UAFL team is growing. In September, Christian Albrecht von Rantzau came on board. As a Trade Manager, he is mainly responsible for the Madagascar business. The UAFL group will be moving to new premises in Mauritius in February 2020. Fortunately, we can stay in the wonderful business park of the Domaine de Labourdonnais and will only be moving a few hundred metres down the road. The new office will be a bit bigger, and its main features will be transparency and openness.

"A melting pot of different cultures"

Trade Manager Christian von Rantzau at his new workplace

Christian von Rantzau

DAL/JTE NEWS: You have been working as a Trade Manager for United Africa Feeder Line (UAFL) in Mapou on Mauritius for several months now. For most people in Europe, this exotic island is mainly known as a holiday paradise. You travelled many countries after you graduated from university, often alone. What did you experience?

CHRISTIAN VON RANTZAU: The trip that left the biggest impression on me was to India. I can hardly describe what an impact those six months had on me. It was as if I had landed on a different planet and been washed into an ocean of uncertainties and opportunities. The culture was a shock and yet unbelievably fascinating. Travelling alone can create an indescribable magic. Freeing yourself from all conventions and compromises can be very liberating.

DAL/JTE NEWS: You are no longer on holiday anymore but in your new job. What is it like to work in paradise? Is it really that paradisiacal?

CHRISTIAN VON RANTZAU: I think, when you are about to land and look out of the window you become aware that this must be a very special place in the world. The way the mountains jut out of the island, surrounded by a luscious green landscape and turquoise water is breath-taking. Paradise is a question of definition, but if palm trees, white sand and endless oceans are what you're looking for, then this island comes pretty close. It really is amazingly beautiful and the colourful scenery is absolutely everywhere. The sun, which shines every day, obviously has an effect on the mood of the people, too. I have lived in Berlin for six months, so this was particularly striking for me. When the fish comes straight from the sea and papayas grow in the garden, then things must be all right. However, everyday life at the office is not very different to that in Europe. My African colleagues' obsession with the air conditioning system reminds me rather a lot of German winters.

DAL/JTE NEWS: What does a regular day at the office look like?

CHRISTIAN VON RANTZAU: It certainly is amazing at what times of day they still reply to emails and exchange ideas. Our team is quite small and everyone is very much aware of their responsibilities. Their commitment is simply astounding. My colleagues are so motivated and dedicated, it's infectious. And I'm glad to be part of this team. Just like in Hamburg, the staff live out the company ethos 150%. We all want to achieve the best possible result. So, fixed office hours don't play much of a role here.

DAL/JTE NEWS: There are not only differences in climate compared to Germany but also differences in the mentality of the people. What has been your experience?

CHRISTIAN VON RANTZAU: It's impossible to generalise. Mauritius is a melting pot of cultures. Especially the way so many different religions live together side by side is an invaluable asset and everyone is aware of that. Personally, I have experienced unbelievably generous hospitality. Across all walks of life. But if I have to characterise the people, I'd say they have a very positive outlook on life.

DAL/JTE NEWS: In Hamburg, work depends very much on the use of computers. What's it like at UAFL?

CHRISTIAN VON RANTZAU: It will probably come as no surprise to people in Hamburg that here too everyone works with computers. But we keep in contact with the customers across all channels: Skype, WhatsApp, email and by phone. Speaking to people in person always involves travelling, which can be quite a challenge in this part of the world. Many of the islands are difficult to reach, but I'm looking forward to it.